

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-41. Canceled.

42. (new) A method of inhibiting the growth of potentially pathogenic bacteria in a body cavity or orifice of a subject suffering from infectious or inflammatory conditions caused by bacteria, virus or fungi, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a combination of lactic acid bacteria comprising a first component (a) consisting of at least one strain of H₂O₂-producing lactic acid bacteria, and a second component (b) consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus salivarius* and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus brevis* DSM 11988, a non-H₂O₂-producing *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*, provided that when component (a) is *Lactobacillus casei*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus gasseri* or *Lactobacillus fermentum*, and when component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus*, component (b) is not *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

43. (new) A method of inhibiting the growth of potentially pathogenic bacteria in a body cavity or orifice of a subject suffering from infectious or inflammatory conditions caused by bacteria, virus or fungi, comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a combination of lactic acid bacteria comprising a first component (a) consisting of at least one strain of H₂O₂-producing lactic acid bacteria, and a second component (b) consisting of at least one strain of arginine-utilizing lactic acid bacteria wherein component (a) is selected from the group consisting of the strains of the species *Lactobacillus crispatus*, *Lactobacillus*

salivarius and *Lactobacillus casei*, and component (b) is *Lactobacillus brevis* DSM 11988, and optionally a non-H₂O₂-producing *Lactobacillus gasseri* and *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

44. (new) The method according to claim 42, in which the strain of lactic acid bacteria in component (b) is biologically pure *Lactobacillus brevis* DSM 11988, or mutants or derivatives thereof.

45. (new) The method according to claim 42, in which the ratio of the number of bacteria in component (a) to the number of bacteria in component (b) is from 1:100 to 100 : 1.

46. (new) The method according to claim 45, in which the said ratio is from 1 : 5 to 5 : 1.

47. (new) The method according to Claim 46, in which the said ratio is from 1: 1.

48. (new) The method according to claim 42, comprising from 1×10^2 to 5×10^{11} bacteria of component (a) and from 1×10^2 to 5×10^{11} bacteria of component (b).

49. (new) The method according to claim 48, comprising from 1×10^9 bacteria of component (a) and from 3×10^9 bacteria of component (b).

50. (new) The method according to Claim 42, wherein there is also administered at least one other strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus cateniforme*, *Lactobacillus cellobiosus*, *Lactobacillus curvatus*, *Lactobacillus delbrueckii*, *Lactobacillus jensenii*, *Lactobacillus leichmannii*, *Lactobacillus minutus*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Bifidobacterium adolescentis*, *Bifidobacterium angulatum*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium breve*, *Bifidobacterium catenulatum*, *Bifidobacterium dentium*, *Bifidobacterium eriksonii*, *Bifidobacterium infantis*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium plantarum* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

51. (new) The method according to Claim 42, wherein there are also administered vitamins, quaternary ammonium bases, mineral salts, antioxidants and anti-plaque agents with component (a) and component (b).

52. (new) The method according to claim 42, wherein component (a) is *Lactobacillus crispatus* and component (b) is *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

53. (new) The method according to claim 42, wherein component (a) is *Lactobacillus salivarius* and component (b) is *Lactobacillus fermentum*.

54. (new) The method according to claim 52, wherein the ratio of the number of bacteria in component (a) to the number of bacteria in component (b) is 1:1.

55. (new) The method according to claim 42, in which the infections and inflammatory conditions are selected from the group consisting of gingivitis, periodontitis, mucositis, stomatitis, Behçet's syndrome, diakeratosis of the oral cavity, glossitis, sore throat, sialadenitis, sialolithiasis, pemphigus, *Lichen planus*, Sjögren's syndrome, vaginosis, vaginitis, urethritis, prostatitis, proctitis, otitis, conjunctivitis, rhinitis, sinusitis, leucoplakia, aphthae, herpes, and infections of *Helicobacter pylori* in the oral cavity.

56. (new) The method according to claim 42 wherein the combination is applied to the subject's mouth, vagina, urethra, nose, eyes or ears.

57. (new) The method according to claim 42, in which the combination is applied to an oral cavity as a deodorant, anti-inflammatory, anti-caries or anti-plaque agent.